

**City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
April 13, 2015 – 4:00 P.M.
City Commission Chambers – City Hall
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301**

October 2014-September 2015

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Wendy Gonsher, Chair	P	6	0
Jasmin Shirley, Vice Chair	P	6	0
Benjamin Bean	A	5	1
Mark Fillers	P	5	1
Wanda Francis	P	6	0
Nicholas Gattozi	P	2	0
Gwendolyn Haynes	P	3	2
Jason King (arr. 4:10)	P	4	2
Chris Lovell	P	6	0
Richard Morris	P	2	0
Fred Roccanti	P	6	0
Noah Szugajew	P	4	0
Joseph S. Van de Bogart	P	5	0

Staff Present

Mario DeSantis, Liaison and Housing Administrator
Jonathan Brown, Housing and Community Development Manager
Marcia Gair, Administrative Aide
Jamie Opperee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to City Commission

None.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Gonsher called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and roll was called.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

The Staff members present introduced themselves at this time.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 9, 2015

Motion made by Ms. Francis, seconded by Vice Chair Shirley, to approve the March 9 minutes. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 16, 2015

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Ms. Francis, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

V. CDBG PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Brown recalled that the previous year, a minimum score of 70 was established for applicants, with no agency considered for funding if its score was below this minimum. The Board discussed this issue, noting that there are only six applicants for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds this year, which means it was possible that every applicant could receive at least partial funding. It was also argued, however, that each application should meet minimum quality standards in order to receive funding.

Motion made by Mr. Lovell, seconded by Vice Chair Shirley, that all agencies be considered for funding despite their score. In a roll call vote, the **motion** failed 5-6 (Chair Gonsher, Mr. Fillers, Ms. Francis, Mr. Gattozi, Mr. Morris, and Mr. Roccanti dissenting).

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Mr. Roccanti, to maintain the threshold of a minimum score of 70 to proceed in the awarding of any grant money. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 6-5 (Vice Chair Shirley, Ms. Haynes, Mr. Lovell, Mr. Szugajew, and Mr. Van de Bogart dissenting).

Mr. Brown advised that the total available funding is \$140,606, which includes \$50,000 in funds carried over from the previous year as well as \$90,606 in new funds.

Chair Gonsher recalled that in past years, the Board had established a rule by which agencies that have received CDBG funding for three consecutive years were prohibited from applying for more funding. She noted that while one agency is participating in the CDBG competitive process for the first time, they have received CDBG funds directly from the City Commission; in addition, the agency also received CDBG funds for two previous years, although not through the public services allocation. Chair Gonsher expressed concern that funding this agency could establish an unwanted precedent for the future.

Mr. Brown advised that in previous years, the agency did not receive CDBG funds, but received Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) dollars, which are funded through a separate entitlement grant program. Mr. Lovell observed that rules of this nature seem to place artificial limits on how funding may be allocated, and may not be clearly stated within the applications.

Motion made by Mr. Lovell that this regulation be removed and that the Board [doesn't] have limitations on agencies applying for funding through CDBG funds that are available from the City of Fort Lauderdale. (The **motion** died for lack of second.)

Mr. Brown clarified that this policy has been communicated to the City Commission, which adopted it; therefore, the City Commission's approval would also be required to change the policy. He added that City Staff communicates this policy to applying agencies during the application process.

Maria Meyer, Director of Development for Jack and Jill Children's Center, requested \$50,000 for the agency's Promising Futures Empowerment Scholarship, which is provided to children from low-income working families through early childhood education and family intervention and support. 90% of participating families are led by working mothers, average \$24,000 in annual income, and fall below 150% of the federal poverty level.

In addition to early childhood education, Jack and Jill's family strengthening program offers training in parent empowerment, financial literacy, health education, and an on-site food and clothing bank, as well as emergency funds for families in need. Families also receive individual and family therapy and case management. The \$50,000 grant would assist 12 to 18 families, who would receive scholarships for the entire year. Weekly tuition is determined on a sliding scale and by age group; for this reason, it is not possible to estimate how many families may receive scholarships.

Chair Gonsher noted that the agency's scorecards for the previous year do not yet include information provided through their performance indicators. Ms. Meyer explained that the six-month testing period had not yet elapsed; however, this information will appear on the scorecard for the next quarter.

Frank J. Larry, representing Technology Resource Center Inc., explained that this nonprofit agency offers training for unemployed low-income individuals to help them gain access to the workforce. Participants in the program go through certification training, and once certified, Technology Resource Center works with Career Source Broward to help these participants find jobs. Individuals may choose from a number of different certification courses at no charge.

Chair Gonsher observed that it may be difficult for the Board to review Technology Resource Center's application, as some items are missing or left blank, including budget sheets and an executive summary.

Mr. Larry clarified that Career Source Broward helps identify potential clients and provides the majority of funding for the program. Once a client selects and goes through a certification program, they must take the required certification test, which is administered using established guidelines. The CDBG request would allow Technology Resource Center to apply to the State of Florida for a license to teach the certification programs and hire instructors. Participants must also qualify for grant funds through Career Source Broward. Mr. Larry concluded that in Miami-Dade County, the program

has achieved a 70% success rate, which means participants both finish the required course and become certified by the vendor.

Reverend Luke Harrigan, representing Grace Community, explained that the organization primarily serves the Haitian community through immigration assistance, and hopes to broaden their services. Mr. Larry of Technology Resource Center, also representing Grace Community, stated that the two organizations work together in partnership.

Grace Community administers the Grace Safe Neighborhood program, which provides after-school training for at-risk students. The program works with school counselors to identify students between the ages of nine and 17 in need of additional help, and assists those students in raising their test scores and grades. The program is administered by certified teachers in two six-month cycles each year, and may include social skills and assimilation as well as academic assistance. The program in Fort Lauderdale has served eight students per cycle thus far, although a similar program based in Miami serves approximately 40 students per cycle.

Michael Calderon, Chief Operating Officer of Broward Partnership for the Homeless, stated that this agency has served over 20,000 homeless individuals and families since its inception. Their request is for \$50,000 from the Emergency Food and Shelter category, \$35,000 of which would be used for food and \$15,000 of which would be used for transportation, such as bus passes. The agency also collaborates with other community organizations to provide case management services for the chronically homeless and provides permanent housing in a scattered-site setting. Its rapid re-housing program for families is privately funded.

Mr. Calderon advised that the facility has recently expanded from 200 to 230 beds, with the additional beds earmarked for women and children. This increase was achieved with no governmental funding. He explained that during the previous CDBG funding cycle, City Staff made the agency aware of available funding when another agency was disqualified; at the City Commission's direction, the Partnership provided an application and documentation, and received CDBG funding from the City Commission.

Chair Gonsler observed that the agency received CDBG funding directly from the City Commission in 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12. Mr. Brown noted that the Broward Partnership did not receive CDBG funding in 2012-13 or 2013-14. He explained that the City Commission typically sets aside funding for the agency without putting them through the competitive process. During the year in which they did not receive CDBG funding, they received an Emergency Solutions Grant; however, these funds are no longer available to the City, which led to the agency's CDBG funding the previous year.

Mr. Calderon clarified that the agency has 64 paid employees and receives a discount from the County on bus passes. Some individuals are also eligible for the County's TOPS program, which provides transportation alternatives for persons with disabilities.

Salaried employees provide case management, workforce development, social assessments, individual/group counseling, and other supportive services. Partnerships with the hospitality industry provide personal hygiene items for clients and assist in training some participants to work in this industry. The agency has a 62% success rate in providing stable housing for individuals and an 86% success rate for families.

Tom Pietrogallo, Director of Psychosocial Services at Care Resource, stated that the agency's request was for \$50,000 from the Emergency Services category for Project Safe, its emergency housing and food program. This would serve roughly 350 individuals for food and emergency overnight accommodations by allowing the agency to hire a part-time worker to manage the program.

It was clarified that Project Safe offers hotel vouchers for one to two nights to its clients. Mr. Pietrogallo explained that placing an individual in a shelter can be a time-consuming process; the vouchers provide a short stay in hotels, often during the weekend, while the agency moves clients into other facilities. Most clients are walk-in clients rather than referrals. Care Resource also provides food vouchers for use at grocery stores.

Dolores DeFerrari, Program Director for Women in Distress of Broward County, explained that the request is for \$50,000 to provide emergency food, clothing, shelter, advocacy, and transitional support services for Fort Lauderdale residents and their dependents who are domestic violence survivors. Clients typically stay at the Fort Lauderdale shelter for 50 to 60 days, during which time staff works with them to secure permanent or transitional housing and ensure their safety, provides information on available services, and offers supportive services including counseling and support groups.

Ms. DeFerrari confirmed that this would be the third year in which the agency would receive CDBG funding. Without these dollars, the agency would likely have to seek private funding, as public funds are continually decreasing.

Chair Gonsher advised all agencies' representatives that they will need to attend the April 27 Board meeting, at which the Board will determine their funding recommendations and review performance indicators. Additional input from the agencies may be necessary at this time. She advised that when Board members submit their evaluations, they should take performance indicators into consideration as well.

With regard to HOPWA, Mr. DeSantis expressed concern that the process may extend into early June, when both Chair Gonsher and Vice Chair Shirley may be unavailable. He explained that this will mean another member will need to act as Chair during the HOPWA discussions. The HOPWA RFP is currently undergoing review by the City Manager's Office.

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Vice Chair Shirley, to nominate Wanda Francis [to act as Chair at the June meeting]. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Mr. DeSantis distributed a handout to the Board members, explaining that there is an additional \$209,000 in one-time funds available for the next HOPWA funding period. The handout included recommendations based on discussions at previous Board meetings. The one-time funds are not included in the upcoming HOPWA RFP. He noted that the recommendations replace \$109,000 into the subsidy portion of Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utilities (STRMU), with the remaining \$100,000 divided between Housing Case Management and Legal Services. After these one-time funds are used, the funding will return to its original baseline allocations.

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Mr. Lovell, to accept the recommendations put forward by Staff for the reallocation of the \$209,000. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Mr. DeSantis concluded that the transfer of housing units from the Housing Authority of Fort Lauderdale to Broward House has been approved. Staff is working closely with Broward House to ensure the transition of services.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Chair Gonsher urged the Board to submit their CDBG votes no later than 12 noon on Friday, April 17, and bring their individual score sheets to the April 20 meeting.

Mr. Brown announced that the City Clerk and City Attorney's Office will provide training related to the Sunshine Law, public records law, and public meetings for members of advisory entities on Monday, April 27 at 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. on the third floor of City Hall. The meeting is open to members of all boards and committees.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VIII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Chair Gonsher noted that the Board will hold a special meeting on Monday, April 20 to make funding recommendations and discuss performance indicators for CDBG-funded agencies.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

Ms. Francis suggested that the Board have additional discussion of the policy prohibiting agencies funded for three consecutive years from receiving funding in the

fourth year. It was confirmed that should the Board decide to rescind this policy, their recommendation would then be taken to the City Commission for approval.

Mr. Lovell asked if a memo was available listing this and similar policies enacted by the Board in previous years, as it would be useful to new members. Mr. Brown replied that this can be provided and discussed further once the CDBG and HOPWA allocations are complete.

Ms. Shirley asked how new applicants are engaged to encourage them to apply for CDBG funding. Mr. Brown noted that it can be difficult to encourage new agencies that have less expertise in grant writing to apply for funds, as their applications may not be prepared as professionally as the applications of larger or more experienced agencies. He advised that Staff works with the agencies to review their proposals and clarify what does or does not meet CDBG requirements. It was also noted that the Board participated in the development of the current application, which has been simplified in recent years.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]